



October 2005

Greetings,

I'm pleased to report on some of the outstanding work being done around the state by law enforcement officers, tribes, social service workers, AGO employees and others dedicated to helping drug endangered children, prosecuting meth crimes, finding ways to keep meth off tribal lands and increasing community meth education efforts.

#### **PROSECUTION**

Scott Marlow, one of the AGO's two new meth prosecutors hired in August, just resolved his first case in Columbia County. The defendant in that case has pled guilty to Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Deliver, and agreed to testify against his co-defendant, who is suspected of being a larger meth dealer in that community.

#### **TRIBAL METH SUMMIT**

Director of Community Relations and Outreach Luke Esser and Policy Director Chris Johnson recently attended a Tribal Meth Summit. The summit was sponsored by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, and focused on the need for treatment and prevention in Indian Country. There was also a panel discussion on the special challenges facing tribal law enforcement officers in interdicting narcotics. Luke and Chris were there mostly to listen, and let tribes know that we want to be a partner with them in preventing meth from devastating tribal communities.

#### **TASK FORCE**

I'm very proud to report on the outstanding work coming out of the Meth Task Force since it convened in August. The first set of reports and recommendations were forwarded to me at the end of September. The numerous sub-committees did an outstanding job addressing a wide array of issues involving the impact of meth on children, families, law enforcement, social services and our communities. Recommendations for the 2006 Legislature are now being developed, along with other potential policy tools to end the meth crisis in our state.

The Task Force will meet for the final time in November, and I will give you a final report on their work in December.

#### **DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN**

Unfortunately, Assistant Attorneys General who represent the Department of Social and Health Services are reporting significant increases in the number of meth-related dependency cases around the state. In our Bellingham, Kennewick and Vancouver offices, from 80-100% of all new cases involve parents using meth.

Policy Director Chris Johnson just participated in a meeting of stakeholders from across the state to discuss forming a Washington State Chapter of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. All present agreed that, while our state already leads the way in implementing drug endangered children guidelines, there would be many benefits to forming an official DEC chapter and affiliating with the national organization.

First, we could help draw attention to the issue by forming a chapter. We would also be dialed into the national organization and all of their resources. And, we would have a focal point for coordinating ongoing DEC training, technical assistance and awareness initiatives involving state and local governments, and community meth action teams.

There was also considerable debate as to whether the state DEC chapter should be a government entity or a grass-roots organization. Those favoring the former argued that the best way to advance the cause of drug endangered children is through direct access to government staff and resources. Others believe that the DEC chapter's most important role is that of advocacy, and that could best be achieved as an independent non-profit organization or foundation. A subcommittee was appointed to bring back a set of recommendations regarding a mission statement, governance proposal and timeline.

### **EDUCATION**

We're working to expand our meth education efforts over the coming months. This morning, we met with Special Agent Keith Neeley of the U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration to discuss partnerships in the area of demand reduction. Agent Neeley works to educate retailers on meth issues, ID theft and other meth-related crimes, and help them understand the importance of not selling drug paraphernalia. He is currently the only federal agent in Washington working on meth prevention and education, so we're looking forward to developing a strong partnership with the DEA on this front.

This week we're also teaming once again with Lead on America for a visit to Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane. On November 22, we'll be giving meth presentations to Horizons Middle School, Vista Middle School and Ferndale High School.

We'll also be having a special evening event in Ferndale for parents and community members interested in learning what they can do to help keep children safe from meth and those who use it. **Please join us at 7:00 PM at Vista Middle School, 6051 Vista Drive in Ferndale.** For more information on this event, contact AGO Public Information Office Sarah Frost at [sarahf1@atg.wa.gov](mailto:sarahf1@atg.wa.gov).

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**November 3** I'll be discussing the cost of meth to the criminal justice system at

the Spokane Rotary meeting on Friday.

**November 9** Final meeting of the Meth Task Force.

**November 17** Methamphetamine will be the topic of discussion at the Port Angeles Kiwanis meeting I'll be attending in November.

**November 19** I'll be giving keynote remarks at the Lewis County Meth Summit, where law enforcement officers, county commissioners and prosecutors will meet to discuss the significant meth problems in their community.

**November 22** Ferndale school and community meth events.

Thanks, as always, for all of your efforts. Let me know if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

*Rob McKenna*

Attorney General